

19941202 154

1. REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE		2.	3. Recipient's Accession No.
4. Title and Subtitle Report of a Surface Examination of Four Archaeological Sites in Hunting Area 90, Fort Knox, Hardin County, Kentucky		5. Report Date September 1992	
7. Author(s) Steven D. Ruple		8. Performing Organization Report No.	
9. Performing Organization Name and Address Directorate of Public Works ATTN: ATZK-PWE (ARCH) U.S. Army Armor Center and Fort Knox Fort Knox, KY 40121-5000		10. Project/Task/Work Unit No.	
12. Sponsoring Organization Name and Address Directorate of Public Works ATTN: ATZK-PWE (ARCH) U.S. Army Armor Center and Fort Knox Fort Knox, KY 40121-5000		11. Contract(G) or Grant(G) No. (G) DACW65-93-D-0039 (G)	
13. Supplementary Notes Employees in Cultural Resource Management Branch of Directorate of Public Works are outside contractors working for J.M. Waller Associates, Inc., 9607 Oakington Dr., Fairfax Station, VA 22039 (contract DACW65-93-D-0039)		14. Type of Report & Period Covered Final (Sep. 1992)	

15. Abstract (Limit 200 words)

A search was made by the staff archaeologist for four archaeological sites reported in O'Malley, et al. (1980) and DiBlase (1986). The objective was to clearly mark the perimeter of the sites to protect them during logging operations in a portion of the proposed Highway 313 corridor. Three of the sites were found, but discrepancies were noted between what was seen in 1992 and what was reported in 1980. The locations of the three may not have been accurately mapped due to terrain visibility, two may have reversed descriptions, and one contained features that did not fully match their earlier descriptions. The fourth site was not found at the mapped location and has not been relocated at this time.

17. Document Analysis a. Descriptors

b. Identifiers/Open-Ended Terms
Archaeology
Hardin County, Kentucky
Fort Knox, Kentucky

Cedar Creek, Kentucky
Rolling Fork River, Kentucky

c. CDSATI Field/Group

18. Availability Statement

Release UNlimited to professional archaeologists
~~only~~

19. Security Class (This Report)

Unclassified

20. Security Class (This Page)

Unclassified

21. No. of Pages
-7 (i + 6)

22. Price

OPTIONAL FORM
(Formerly NTIS)
Department of C

See Instructions on Reverse

(See ANSI Z39.18)

**REPORT OF A SURFACE EXAMINATION OF
FOUR ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES IN HUNTING AREA 90,
FORT KNOX, HARDIN COUNTY, KENTUCKY**

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Accession For	
NTIS	CRA&I <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
DTIC	TAB <input type="checkbox"/>
Unannounced <input type="checkbox"/>	
Justification _____	
By _____	
Distribution/ _____	
Availability Codes	
Dist	Avail and/or Special
A-1	

September, 1992

REPORT OF A SURFACE EXAMINATION OF
FOUR ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES IN HUNTING AREA 90,
FORT KNOX, HARDIN COUNTY, KENTUCKY

Summary. A search was made by the staff archaeologist for four archaeological sites reported in O'Malley, et al. (1980) and DiBlase (1986). The objective was to clearly mark the perimeter of the sites to protect them during logging operations in a portion of the proposed Highway 313 corridor. Three of the sites were found, but discrepancies were noted between what was seen in 1992 and what was reported in 1980. The locations of the three may not have been accurately mapped due to terrain visibility, two may have reversed descriptions, and one contained features that did not fully match their earlier descriptions. The fourth site was not found at the mapped location and has not been relocated at this time.

Setting. The four sites lie on densely wooded slopes above a dissected drainage in the southeastern quadrant of Hunting Area (HA) 90, near the extreme southern limits of Fort Knox, Kentucky (Figure 1). All lie within Hardin County. The drainages below the sites are cut into limestone, and limestone forms the beds of the intermittent streams at their bases. The converged waters flow westwardly into Cedar Creek at a confluence about a mile west of the sites.

Site 15Hd186: This is a historic site described by O'Malley, et al. as being located on the crest of a linear ridge near Cedar Creek, in open forest, and comprised of limestone foundation stones, artifactual debris, and a cistern. The site today consists of a circular well, a rectangular depression, a smaller circular depression, and four limestone blocks or stones lying on the ground. The well is lined with neatly cut and laid limestone blocks. The cylindrical shaft is roughly three feet in diameter and at least 20 feet deep. It lies approximately 8 m east of the northeast corner of the rectangular depression.

The round depression is small and lies some 30 m northwest of the large depression, the closest feature. It may be a natural feature of the karst topography. It is not likely that it was a cistern; as noted earlier, the UK crew may have been referring to the well when they described a cistern. No site map is included in the report to clarify this point. No privy or other outbuildings have been identified at this site.

The rectangular depression lies about 8 m (26 feet) west of the well and measures 10 feet east-west by 8 feet north south (at present, all measurements are estimated). The sides have eroded and slope to a concave base roughly three feet deep. Four limestone blocks lie in the area southwest of this depression and may represent supports for a structure; that area appears

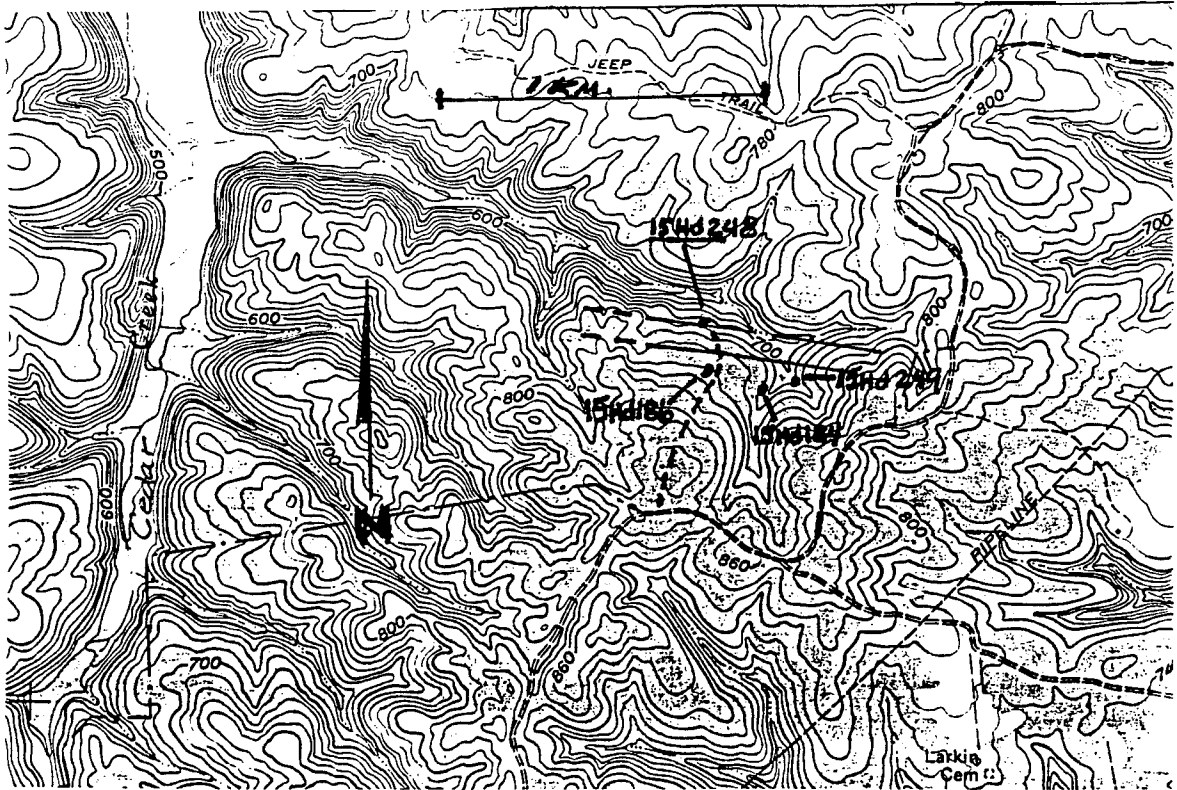


Figure 1. Portion of Colesburg Quadrangle topographic map showing four mapped locations of archaeological sites, portion of Highway 313 corridor (parallel lines), and access road (dotted line).

artificially flattened. There is no natural outcrop or source of limestone nearby or uphill from their present position, and similar stones are not lying about the general area. A structure there would probably not occupy more than 15 x 25 feet, estimated. None of the three features has been investigated archaeologically. The site location given on the map in Figure C-35 (O'Malley, et al. 1980:599) may be too far north. Crude measurements made with a truck odometer show a distance of approximately 0.15 miles from the beginning of the downward slope northward to the site. O'Malley's map distance for that same track is 0.28 miles. A Ground Positioning System (GPS) will soon be available to accurately position these and other sites in the near future.

Site 15Hd184 and Site 15Hd249: There may be some mix-up between these sites. Site 15Hd184 was described by O'Malley, et al. as a prehistoric lithic scatter situated on the edge of a ridge crest overlooking the confluence of two intermittent streams near Cedar Creek. But the map (O'Malley, et al. 1980:Figure C-35) suggests that site 15Hd249 overlooks the confluence of the two streams and that site 15Hd184 lies south of the confluence and on the west side of a north-south ravine. Site 15Hd249 is described by O'Malley, et al., as a mound of limestone on the edge of a ridge crest overlooking a tributary of Cedar Creek. An examination of the two site areas revealed a low mound of limestone cobbles very close to the mapped site of 15Hd184 (Figure 2). On the opposite bank of the intermittent stream, and 100-150 m northeast, the mapped site of site 15Hd249 is in the midst of a weathered limestone and chert outcrop in a crescent-shaped cedar glade. A thin scatter of debitage and naturally broken fragments of chert was observed there; no mound of limestone could be found.

Both sites were described as being open forest with 15-25 percent surface visibility. At present, either could be described as forest, although the glade is considerably more open than the canopied forest across the ravine where the mound lies. The cedar glade is on a steep slope with little or no soil on rock outcrops and only a thin soil between outcrops. The steep slope and exposed, weathered limestone result in a surface covered with small fragments of platy limestone and some chert. Many fragments have been fractured through natural forces, and small blocky fragments of chert can be seen over much of the glade that fit the description given in O'Malley, et al., for 15Hd184. Some may have been the result of human activity and the glade may have been the source of some raw materials for tool manufacture.

Site 15Hd248: This site was not found. This site was described by O'Malley, et al., as lying on the crest of a ridge spur overlooking Cedar Creek (O'Malley, et al. 1980:255). Cedar Creek lies about a mile west of this site, outside of the surveyed area. The mapped location does overlook a deep ravine with an unnamed intermittent stream that drains west to Cedar Creek. The description given does



Figure 2. Portion of limestone block mound at mapped location of 15Hd184, looking west.

not state which side of the ravine the site is on, but the map shows it to lie on the south bank, due north of 15Hd186. A reconnaissance of that area did not disclose a limestone mound near the ridge crest. Topographically, there is no clear ridge crest. The slope gradually increases until the surface includes scattered outcrops of vertical limestone. The search involved two transects across the face of the hill, one just above the line of outcrops and the second approximately 40-60 m uphill from the first.

Conclusion. The main purpose of this examination was to relocate four previously reported sites in preparation for a timber harvest scheduled to begin in October, 1992. Site 15Hd248, reported to be a small mound of limestone rocks, was not relocated. After walking away from another stone mound, 15Hd184, it was noted that the mound could not be seen from a distance of 10 m due to the dense cover of vegetation. Site 15Hd248 is described by O'Malley, et al., as looking much like this and it may have eluded detection.

A lithic scatter was found where a limestone mound was recorded and a limestone mound was found where the lithic scatter was mapped. It is possible that a clerical error has transposed the descriptions of the two sites, 15Hd184 and 15Hd249. The inaccurate mapping of all these sites is understandable given the small range of visibility and the relative inexperience of some of the UK crews. All the relocated sites have been marked and will be protected during timbering activities.

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